

SB 1145 – Hearing Testimony

The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association

Dennis H. Eade, Executive Director

Thank you Madame Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Dennis Eade, and I am executive director of The Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association. We have twelve chapters located throughout Michigan with thousands of members and affiliates representing the interests of all fishers in the Great Lakes Basin. We actively pursue the preservation and improvement of the Great Lakes ecosystem and its connecting waterways. We work closely with the MDNR on the Lake Committees to protect the sport fishery and enhance the sustainability of the sport fishery.

I am in opposition to SB 1145 which would allow lake trout, a designated game fish, to be harvested as a by-product, in limited quantities, on commercial fishing vessels. This is a jeopardous encroachment on the sport fishery which is already encumbered by total allowable catch rates for lake trout in many parts of the Great Lakes.

The collective efforts of the MDNR, the Tribes and U.S Fish and Wildlife Service to restore lake trout in numbers to assure fishing opportunities for the tribes and sport fishermen can be seriously impacted by this action. To consider this legislation now in an abbreviated twelve day legislative session does disservice to all of us who have been working so hard these past months to assist legislators to develop a new comprehensive commercial fishing statute that can address this matter and other serious concerns by all the impacted parties. SB 925, sponsored by Senator Green, was an effort to develop a comprehensive approach to a new Commercial Fishing Statue but it did not receive the committee hearings it deserved. Now, with the new legislature beginning in January 2019, we have the opportunity to do a comprehensive bill and achieve the new Commercial Fishing Statue that we so desperately need in Michigan.

The fishery has been devastated by the introduction of aquatic invasive species like the sea lamprey, zebra and quagga mussels. The forage base has been seriously impacted and sport fishermen are depending more and more on catching lake trout to maintain interest in sport fishing for both in-state and out-of-state fishers. Sport fishing attracts over 347,000 out-of-state fishers to come to Michigan every year adding to our tourism revenue. Michigan ranks second only to the state of Florida in sport fishing tourism numbers. We have a \$4.2 billion dollar sport fishing industry in Michigan and we are the envy of 47 of the 48 contiguous states. Let's not jeopardize what brings tourism dollars into the state and provides days and weeks of enjoyment to the 1.2 million of us who buy Michigan fishing licenses every year. Let's not act on SB1145.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide MSSFA's input into the legislative process.